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SUBJECT: MAY 5 BINGOL EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

REF: A) ANKARA 2840 B) ANKARA 2868

1. (U) Press sources put the toll from the Bingol earthquake at 167 killed and 521 injuries. Rescue operations were concluded on Sunday, May 4. At the Celtiksuyu Boarding School, GOT rescue teams saved 114 students from the wreckage but 84 students and one teacher were killed. Riots also appear to have ceased.

2. (U) The Turkish Red Crescent distributed 6500 tents in the province, including 1100 tents disbursed to the villages. Press reports state that 82 houses collapsed and 1100 additional homes are in uninhabitable condition.

3. (U) The national press is full of stories suggesting some of the damage - specifically the collapse of the boarding school - was the result of shoddy construction, which in turn is linked to corruption. An official from the Turkish Chamber of Architects and Engineers, who went to the site to look into these claims, is quoted as saying the "placement of the building was wrong, the construction techniques were wrong, and the concrete used was extremely weak." Bingol Governor Huseyin Cos, one of the main targets of last Friday's violent demonstrations, has promised a full investigation into the school's construction. Press reports quote Bulent Arinc, Turkish Parliament Speaker, calling for the prosecution of those responsible for the shoddy construction of the school.  
HOLTZ